United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
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January 3, 2007

PENNSYLVANIA BULLETIN NO. PA440-7-4

SUBJECT: PGM – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP) APPLICATION AND RANKING FOR COVER CROP AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT—USE EFFICENCY

Purpose: To Provide PA Policy and Guidance for FY07 EQIP Ranking and Contracting.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2007

The attached Winter Cover Crop and Nutrient Management Use Efficiency Fact Sheets outline the program provisions for EQIP.

The cut off date for accepting EQIP applications to be included in the second ranking period for FY 07 is February 2, 2007.

Evaluations (rankings) for cover crop and nutrient management must be completed and entered into ProTracts by March 2, 2007. Selection of applications for these concerns will be done at the State Office level. Funds for applications selected will be transferred from the State Office to the Field Teams for contracting.

If you have any questions, contact Ed Sanders, EQIP Program Manager at 717-237-2201 or by E-mail: edward.sanders@pa.usda.gov or Barry Frantz, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs at 717-237-2216 or E-mail: barry.frantz@pa.usda.gov.

/s/

CRAIG R. DERICKSON
State Conservationist

Attachments (2)
Distribution: AO

USDA – NRCS
EQIP Winter Cover Crop Program
Fact Sheet

Cover Crop (340) – This practice is to control erosion during periods when major crops do not furnish adequate cover; add organic material to the soil; improve infiltration, aeration and tilth; and to protect water quality and enable improved nutrient management.

An annual incentive payment is authorized on eligible acres at $20/acre/year, up to 100 acres per year, per operation, not to exceed 3 years.

Cover crop seeding will be completed based on an approved cover crop seeding and management plan.

Program Goals:

- Approximately $1.2 million for winter cover crops;
- Cover crops to follow the harvest of corn, sorghum, soybeans, tobacco, and vegetables;
- Establish 20,000 acres of cover crops per year.

Important Dates:

- Planting dates

Crop	Central/West	Southeast	Rate
Barley	Early October	Mid October	2.5 Bu/ac
Wheat	Mid October	Mid October	2 Bu/ac
Triticale	Mid October	Mid October	2 Bu/ac
Rye	Mid October	Late October	2 Bu/ac
Ryegrass	Early October	Mid October	30 Lbs/ac

Requirements:

- Applies to all Counties in Pennsylvania;
- Minimum of 5 acres per operating unit (farm operation) must be enrolled;
- Approval amount may not exceed 100 acres per operating unit;
- No nutrients of any source may be applied before March 1, 2007;
    - An exception is allowed for fall application if livestock is present on the farm, there is inadequate manure storage, no other cropland or option is available and application is in accordance with a NMP;
- All seed purchased for cover crop must be tested and properly labeled in accordance with the Pennsylvania Seed Law and regulations. If the grower elects to use home grown seed, it must be tested prior to seeding for purity, germination and noxious weeds by a recognized seed laboratory;
- All seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seed;
- Grazing or "green chopping" for livestock forage (for on farm use) is allowed after fall crop is well established (+/- 80% cover);
- Applicants must be in good standing with USDA-NRCS Programs.

USDA – NRCS
EQIP Nutrient Management - Use Efficiency Program
Fact Sheet

Nutrient Management (590) – The nutrient use efficiency option includes multiple nutrient management tools ranging from basic nutrient management plan implementation to precise agricultural techniques. This EQIP option is being offered under the Statewide Nutrient Management sub-account.

NRCS in Pennsylvania wants to reward producers who implement nutrient management techniques that go beyond the minimum requirements of the Nutrient Management standard (590). Incentive payment is authorized on eligible acres for 3 years.

Incentive payments are eligible for the development, and implementation of the nutrient management plan. Farmers must have implemented basic nutrient management for two years before being eligible for advanced nutrient management. No payment will be greater than $3,500 per operating unit (farm operation) for the development of a nutrient management plan.

Basic Nutrient Management Plan Development

- Written (Operating Unit) $ 500/plan
- Written (Acres) $ 4/acre

Basic Nutrient Management Plan Implementation

- Total acres $ 8/acre

⇒ Phosphorous Based Nutrient Management using PA 590;
⇒ Producers applying any form of nutrients may be eligible (organic and inorganic sources);
⇒ Records shall be kept, submitted, and verified prior to payments;
⇒ Grazing operations may be eligible;
⇒ Soil testing (minimum of 3 years), and manure analysis (each group, each year) is required;
⇒ May incorporate cover crop, application setbacks, and buffers as options;

Advanced NM (Max. 250 acres)

- Split application corn/wheat $ 7/ac (no organics applied)
- PSNT w/side-dress $ 15/ac
- Chlorophyll Meter w/side-dress $ 15/ac
- CSNT $ 2/ac
- P crop removal $ 3/ac

⇒ *Split Nitrogen application corn* – Process of matching nitrogen supply with crop uptake during the growth periods. Initial nutrient application will be 50% or less of the total crop need; apply the remaining crop needs during the growth period based on soil or plant testing recommendations;
⇒ *PSNT – Pre Side-dress Nitrate Test*; Soil test for nitrate-nitrogen (N03-N) developed for use at the four to six leaf stage of corn to project more accurate N fertilizer recommendations at side-dressing time.
⇒ *Chlorophyll Meter* – Portable, hand held device to instantaneously measure the chlorophyll content of the plant in the field. The test consists of taking meter readings of the corn leaves between the six and eight leaf stage (10’ to 20” tall);

USDA – NRCS
EQIP Nutrient Management - Use Efficiency Program
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⇒ *CSNT – Corn Stalk Nitrate Test*; End of season plant tissue test to evaluate the nitrogen status of both silage and grain corn at the end of the growing season. This measures the nitrate concentrations in the lower portions of the stalk enabling to distinguish between optimal and excess application of N.

⇒ *P crop removal – Crop Removal Phosphorus Application Rate (organics only);* Limit applied phosphorous to the amount the crop is projected to remove in a growing season or over the life of the crop rotation;

Precision Evaluation/Application (Max. 250 acres)

- Small unit management (5ac or less) $ 10/ac
- Grid management $ 10/ac
- Smart sampling w/variable rate appl. $ 12/ac
- Nutrient Use Efficiency Tools $ 8/ac

⇒ *Small unit management (5ac or less)* – Manage individual fields/strips as separate units. Recommendations and nutrient applications would be based on a 3-5 acre maximum unit.

⇒ *Grid Management* – Sampling, analysis, and variable rate application based on a predetermined grid in a management unit.

⇒ *Smart sampling w/variable rate application* – Using knowledge of field conditions such as soils, topography, and landscape positions to collect data. Aerial photos, yield maps, and other data used as part of the analysis and nutrient applications to base the variable rate upon differing yield potentials.

⇒ *Nutrient Use Efficiency Tools* – Techniques such as variable rate planting, application timing, urease inhibitors, and variable rate nutrient/lime application.

Pasture System NM

- Forage Testing $ 600/yr
- NUTBAL $ 180/group/yr

⇒ *Forage Testing* – Test 3 times per year (minimum 4 tests) for variable pasture conditions shall be used to develop/implement pasture nutrient management recommendations.

⇒ *NUTBAL*- Nutritional Monitoring System for Grazing Animals – The analysis of fecal samples to determine the quality of the forage the animals were consuming 36 hours prior to defecating.

Requirements:

- Applies to all Counties in Pennsylvania;
- Minimum of 5 acres per operating unit (farm operation) must be enrolled;
- Maximum of $3,500 per operating unit (farm operation) to write the plan;
- Approval amount may not exceed 250 acres per operating unit for Advanced NM and Precision Evaluation/Application;
- Nutrient management plans prepared for the purpose of obtaining biosolids application permit are not eligible;
- The nutrient management plan must be based on both nitrogen and phosphorus as the limiting nutrient;